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# WILDLIFE FURBEARER TRAPPING LAWS AND REGULATIONS



The ownership of wildlife within Illinois is held by the state in trust for all the people. Laws and regulations governing how wildlife may be hunted or trapped are necessary to insure that no one takes more than his share and that enough breeding stock will be left each spring to replenish what man and the forces of nature have harvested the preceding year.

This brochure is a guide to the more permanent laws and regulations. **Please remember that it is only a guide.** More complete information is available from Department of Conservation offices or from Law Enforcement Division personnel. A list of offices where you may obtain information is listed in this brochure. Please remember that regulations on Department managed public lands may be more restrictive. Be sure to check with the area manager to determine what regulations prevail at the area where you want to trap.

Furbearer trapping season dates, bag and possession limits are not stated because they may change annually. Your local newspaper, radio or TV station receives this information for public distribution. Department of Conservation offices have season information. "Outdoor Highlights", a Department of Conservation periodical, also carries hunting and trapping season information. You may obtain Outdoor Highlights by completing the subscription blank included in this brochure.



Illinois  
Department of  
Conservation  
life and land together

## DEFINITIONS

### Fur-bearing Mammals

The following 14 species are defined as fur-bearing mammals and protected by Illinois law: badger (*Taxidea taxus*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), mink (*Mustela vison*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*), river otter (*Lutra canadensis*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*) and least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*).

### Green Hide

A green hide is any hide or pelt which has not been tanned.

### Trap

Trap means to capture or attempt to capture by setting or placing a leghold trap, body-gripping trap, cage or live trap or other similar device permitted by the Illinois Wildlife Code to capture, hold or kill fur-bearing mammals.

## TRAPPING LICENSE

Before any person shall trap any of the fur-bearing mammals protected by the Illinois Wildlife Code, for which an open season has been established, he shall first procure a trapping license from the Department of Conservation. The **ONLY EXCEPTION** to the rule is: an owner or bonafide tenant of farm land and his children actually living on the land where they trap. There are **NO** provisions for cost-free trapping licenses for physically disabled persons, Illinois residents on ordinary leave from U.S. Armed Forces, or persons 65 years of age or older.

Sportsmen under 16 years of age must present written permission of their parents or legal guardian before buying a trapping license.

All trapping licenses expire on March 31 of each year.

Every person holding a trapping license shall have the same in his possession for immediate presentation for inspection to any authorized law enforcement officer.

Non-resident trapping licenses are available. Contact the Department of Conservation's Springfield office for details. The address is listed elsewhere in this brochure.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Every person trapping fur-bearing mammals shall make a report to the Department of Conservation *upon blank forms supplied by the Department* of all fur-bearing mammals trapped and sold during the open season. Failure to report or filing false reports shall subject the person to certain penalties provided by the Illinois Wildlife Code. Further, the Department of Conservation may refuse to issue a trapping license for the following year to any person who has failed to file such a report. (Note: Normally, report forms are mailed only to a random sample of trappers which includes approximately 10% of all individuals licensed. If you do not receive a report form/questionnaire directly from the Department after the regular trapping season, you are not required to submit a report of your catch.)

## GREEN HIDE EXPORT PERMIT

It is unlawful for any person not holding a fur buyer, tanner or taxidermist permit to ship, transport, or export any green hide of any legally taken fur-bearing mammal outside the State of Illinois unless he first obtains a special free exportation permit authorizing such shipment, transportation or exportation. The permit shall list the number and kinds of green hides in each shipment and shall have plainly marked thereon the name, address, and



license number of the hunter or trapper. A copy of the permit shall be attached to each bundle of green hides during shipment or transportation. The export permit is valid for a period of 30 days from the date of issue. Green hide export permits are available from all Conservation offices listed in this brochure.

## **TRAP TAGS**

Traps used in the taking of fur-bearing mammals must be marked or tagged with metal tags or inscribed in lettering giving the NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE OWNER.

## **PROTECTED SPECIES**

Badger, bobcat, and river otter are protected in Illinois by a continuous closed season. These species may not be taken at any time. If you find a dead badger, bobcat, or river otter, please report the incident to a Conservation Police Officer or District Wildlife Manager.

## **POSSESSION OF GREEN HIDES AFTER CLOSE OF SEASON**

It is unlawful for hunters or trappers to possess green hides before the season begins or longer than 10 days after the season closes.

## **LIVE CAPTURE**

It is unlawful to take any species of wildlife and retain it alive.

## **REQUIRED CLOTHING**

It is unlawful to trap afield during the firearm deer season when NOT wearing the blaze orange clothing required for deer hunting. (Note: A cap and upper outer garment displaying a minimum of 400 square inches of a solid blaze orange color are required.)

## **HUNTING OR TRAPPING ON HIGHWAYS**

It is unlawful to hunt or trap along, upon, across, or from any public right-of-way or highway in the State of Illinois.

## **MOLESTING OR DESTROYING DENS**

It is unlawful to molest, destroy or attempt to destroy any feed bed, nest, den, house or other cavity of any mammal protected by the Illinois Wildlife Code including all fur-bearing mammals. A feed bed is defined as a mound, pile or mat of branches, cattails or other vegetation gathered and piled by muskrats or beaver.

## **GENERAL TRAPPING LAWS**

It is *unlawful*:

For any person at any time to take, possess, sell, or offer for sale any fur-bearing mammal or part thereof, including green hides, contrary to the provisions of the Illinois Wildlife Code (Chapter 61, Illinois Revised Statutes).

To fail to visit and remove all animals from traps at least once each calendar day. (Note: You must check your traps at least every 24 hours and remove or release any animals caught.)

To use a leghold trap on land that has a jaw spread larger than 6½ inches or a body-gripping trap that has a jaw spread larger than 7 inches on a side if square and 8 inches if round. (Note: You can not use a leghold trap on land larger than a #4 Victor or a body-gripping trap larger than a #220 Conibear. The #330 Conibear and #4 Oneida jump traps are prohibited for land sets.)

To use a leghold trap in water that has a jaw spread larger than 7½ inches or a body-gripping trap that has a jaw spread larger than 10 inches on a side if square and 12

inches if round. (Note: The #330 Conibear and #4 Oneida jump traps may be used for water sets. No traps larger than these are permitted.)

To use any trap with saw-toothed, spiked, or toothed jaws. (Note: Holdfast jaw attachments and the #14 Oneida Victor are prohibited.)

To destroy, disturb or in any manner interfere with dams, lodges, burrows or feed beds of beaver while trapping for beaver or to set a trap inside a muskrat house or beaver lodge.

To trap beaver with a leghold trap having a jaw spread of less than 5½ inches or more than 7½ inches except that this shall not apply during the open season for trapping muskrats. (Note: Large traps, e.g. #3 and #4 long spring or #3 and #4 jump, are the only leghold traps which may be used for beaver when the muskrat season is closed.)

To set traps closer than 10 feet from any hole or den which may be occupied by a game mammal or fur-bearing mammal except that this restriction does not apply to water sets. (Note: You may legally set traps within 10 feet of dens in water, but such sets are unlawful on land.)

To trap any fur-bearing mammal with any colony, cage, box or stove-pipe trap *designed to take more than one mammal at a single setting*. (Note: It is legal to use single catch cage or live traps. Repeating or colony traps are not permitted.)

For any person to make any set or place any trap or part thereof including the trap itself, chain or drag during the closed trapping season. (Note: No traps may be placed in the field, set or unset, during the closed trapping season. However, it is permissible to set out stakes or floats before the season opens if no traps are attached to them.)

To place, set or maintain any leghold trap within 30 feet of bait placed in such a manner or position that it is not completely covered and concealed from sight, except that this shall not apply to underwater sets. Bait means any bait composed of mammal, bird or fish flesh, fur, hide, entrails or feathers. (Note: Traps may not be placed around exposed bait such as animal carcasses. Such sets often result in the capture of non-target species such as hawks, owls or domestic animals.)

To take beaver, weasel, mink or muskrat except by trapping. (Note: You may not legally shoot beaver, weasel, mink or muskrat.)

To use poisons, chemicals or explosives to take any species protected by the Illinois Wildlife Code including fur-bearing mammals.

To use or possess any snare or snare-like device, dead-fall, net or pit trap to take any species protected by the Illinois Wildlife Code including fur-bearing mammals.

To use spears, gigs, hooks or any like device to take any species protected by the Illinois Wildlife Code including fur-bearing mammals.

For any person to trap or hunt upon the land of another or upon the waters flowing over or standing on the land of another without first obtaining permission from the owner or tenant.

For any person to remove fur-bearing animals from, or to move or disturb in any manner, the traps owned by another person without written authorization of the owner to do so.

To damage or destroy another person's property while trapping on his land.

## PENALTIES

Any person who violates any of the above provisions, upon conviction, may be fined up to \$500 and/or given 6 months imprisonment.

## TRAPPERS:

KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING! Get OUTDOOR HIGHLIGHTS now. It's packed with up-to-date information that you'll need. Know season dates, times and bag limits as soon as they are available. All hunting permit applications will be included. Also fishing reports, camping conditions and other conservation and outdoor recreation news. OUTDOOR HIGHLIGHTS will come to you twice a month throughout the year. Don't be without it!

Please send check or money order only. Make payable to Illinois Department of Conservation. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSCRIPTION RATE (Please Check One)

☐ 1 year-\$4.00    ☐ 2 years-\$7.50    ☐ 3 years-\$10.50

Send Coupon and check to: Illinois Department of Conservation, Information/Education, Dept. NL. 605 Wm G. Stratton Building, Springfield, IL 62706.

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## A CODE FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAPPING

Conservationists, wildlife managers, and others who believe in protecting and enhancing wildlife, recognize trapping as one of the most suitable means of harvesting furbearers and controlling predators when it is conducted by responsible trappers.

Such trappers:

Obtain the landowner's permission before trapping on his land.

Avoid setting traps in areas where domestic animals may be caught.

Set their traps to kill quickly utilizing water sets where possible.

Check their traps regularly and preferably in the early morning.

Identify and record their trap locations carefully and accurately.

Dispose of animal carcasses properly so as not to offend others.

Make an effort to concentrate trapping in areas where animals are overabundant for the supporting habitat.

Promptly report the presence of diseased animals to wildlife authorities.

Assist farmers and other landowners who are having problems with predators or other nuisance animals.

Support and help train new trappers.

Support strict enforcement of regulations including the reporting of all catches to state wildlife agencies.

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Adapted from "Trapping and Wildlife Management", Woodstream Corp., 1976.

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# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION OFFICES

## SPRINGFIELD OFFICES

Division of Law Enforcement  
605 Wm. G. Stratton Building  
Tel. 217/782-6431

Division of Fish and  
Wildlife Resources  
605 Wm. G. Stratton Building  
Tel. 217/782-6384

Division of Information  
& Education  
605 Wm. G. Stratton Building  
Tel. 217/782-7454

## CHICAGO OFFICE

160 North LaSalle, Room 100  
Tel. 312/793-2070

## REGIONAL OFFICES

Region I, 2612 Locust  
Sterling, IL 61081  
Tel. 815/625-2968

Region II, 110 James Road  
Spring Grove, IL 60081  
Tel. 815/675-2385

Region III, 8 Henson Place  
Champaign, IL 61820  
Tel. 217/333-5773

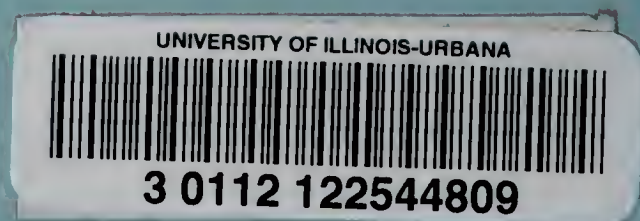
Region IV, 34 W. Broadway  
Alton, IL 62002  
Tel. 618/462-1181

Region V, P.O. Box D  
Benton, IL 62812  
Tel. 618/435-8138

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